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ABSTRACT

Results of a survey on organizational characteristics and issues are presented. The report updates a survey conducted in 1978, and where appropriate compares findings with those of the earlier survey. Ten state associations and seven regional associations responded to a questionnaire soliciting information regarding: organizational size; membership costs; types of publications issued by the organization; the frequency, duration and activities of association meetings; changes anticipated in the next three years. Results indicate that average association membership dropped on the state level and increased regionally with a slight overall increase. Newsletters, the most commonly used publication, also increased in use; on the other hand, journal production declined. Meeting content and format remained fairly uniform and each association had at least one meeting per year. One major change occurring was the 25 percent rise in annual membership costs. Increases in member participation and in the number and type of publications were areas in which change was anticipated. (AEF)

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STATUS REPORT ON STATE AND REGIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATIONS

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STATUS REPORT ON STATE AND REGIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATIONS

Introduction

At the 1978 business meeting of the AERA Special Interest Group on State and Regional Educational Research Associations, the results of a survey on organizational characteristics, operations and issues were reported by Tanya M. Suarez. Following the 1980 business meeting, an update of that survey was proposed for presentation as part of the 1981 meeting.

This paper presents the findings from the 1981 survey and, where pertinent, compares the findings with those from 1978.

Procedures

A questionnaire was developed to cover those items which might be different from those of three years ago. Items of interest included (1) membership costs, (2) meetings, (3) publications and (4) changes anticipated during the next three years.

Questionnaires were sent to the twenty-three associations included in the Special Interest Group listing for March, 1980. Responses were received from eighteen, or 78 percent, of the associations. One of the associations reported that it was inactive at the present time. This paper, therefore, reports on seventeen associations. (Fifteen associations were included in the 1978 report.)

Ten (or 69 percent) of the seventeen active associations considered themselves state associations, and the other seven (or 41 percent) were regional, a slight disproportion in favor of state associations.

Findings

Current Status

Paid membership--The average membership reported (or estimated) by fifteen of the associations was 180. The state associations, however, were considerably smaller than the regional, with an average state membership of 125, compared to an average regional membership of 240.

Membership period--Over half (53 percent) used a calendar year as their membership period, with 30 percent going by the academic school year and the remaining 17 percent using some other calendar division.

Mailing lists--The average state association had over 1,200 names on its mailing list (the range was from 90 to 7,000), while the regional average was 300 names (with a range from 100 to 580).

Association Publications

All associations had some type of publication, produced from once a year to as frequently as eight times a year. The most common publication was a newsletter, mentioned by fifteen of the seventeen associations.

The publications reported by each type of association and the publication frequencies are presented in Table 1

Table 1

State and Regional Association Publications

Type of Publication	Number Reporting Use			Frequency Range
	Regional	State	Combined	
Newsletter	7	8	15	1-6
Special notices, announcements	3	5	8	2-8
Membership directories	4	2	6	1
Proceedings	4	1	5	1
Program abstracts	2	3	5	1
Journal	1	1	2	1

Membership Costs

Organizational dues for individual annual memberships had a mode of $10.00, with an average cost of $9.00 for regional and $12.00 for state dues. The range for dues was from $2.00 to $25.00. One association had special district and corporate memberships of substantially greater cost (districts at 5¢ per pupil and corporate memberships of $200.00).

Organizational dues included the publications for all associations. Student memberships were mentioned by four associations, at a reduced cost (up to half as much).

The meeting costs (registration, meals, training sessions, etc.) were in addition to the organizational dues. Registration fees ranged from $5.00 to $60.00, and, in some cases, included one or more meals. The average registration cost was $18.00.

Association Meetings

Meeting frequency--The majority of associations held membership meetings once a year. Four of the five associations holding more than one membership meeting had two or three meetings, with one association reporting five meetings including four half-day meetings.

Meeting duration--The regional associations held longer meetings (from two to four days in length) than did the state associations (from one-half to two days). The average regional meeting was three days long, and the average state meeting was one and one-half days long.

Meeting activities--All associations had approximately the same types of activities at their meetings. These activities and the proportion of state and regional associations reporting each of these activities is presented in Table 2. Other activities mentioned by one or two associations were breakfasts, invited symposia and a summer retreat.

Table 2

Membership Meeting Activities Reported by Seventeen State and Regional Research Associations

Activity	Percent Reporting	
	Regional	State
Business meetings	100%	100%
Paper sessions	100%	90%
Invited addresses	100%	90%
Symposia	100%	80%
Training sessions	86%	80%
Luncheons	86%	80%
Special topic sessions	71%	60%
Round tables	71%	30%
Dinners	57%	50%
Special interest groups	57%	0%

Anticipated Association Changes

Annual meetings--Regional associations reported possible meeting changes for the next three years. One change reported was a shift toward the weekend (Thursday through Saturday) from a weekday format. Two changes were reported for meeting content, with one association emphasizing urban education and the other wishing to have more speakers on current issues.

Four of the state associations reported hopes for increased participation in membership meetings, and two associations hoped to collaborate with other professional/regional/state groups in their meetings.

Publications--Publication additions mentioned by regional associations included increasing the use of a newsletter, upgrading articles in the newsletter, expanding to a newsletter or journal format, adding a journal and publishing a monograph. Another change mentioned by a regional association was to include the membership directory in the annual meeting program.

One or more state associations hoped to either begin a newsletter, have more newsletters, or expand newsletters to include articles. Two associations anticipated publishing a membership directory.

Conclusions

Membership

The average association membership was only slightly larger than in 1978, an average membership increase from 173 to 180. The difference between state and regional associations had changed considerably, with state averages dropping about thirty-five persons and regional averages increasing about fifty-five persons.

Publications

Newsletters were the most common form of publication, with more associations of both types reporting their use than three years ago. Fewer associations now produce journals than in 1978. Membership directories and conference proceedings are proportionally more used by regional than by state associations.

Both types of associations were interested in upgrading or increasing their publications in the near future.

Membership Costs

As might be anticipated, the average annual membership cost was twenty-five percent higher in 1981 than in 1978, with the average in dues rising from $8.00 to $10.00. The annual dues continued to cover the cost of publications (if any). In some associations students were offered reduced price memberships.

Association Meetings

The majority of associations held one meeting a year, as was true in 1978. All regional associations continued to have a single meeting.

Meetings continued to average two days, although regional associations were more apt to have longer meetings than the state associations.

Meeting activities were fairly uniform for both types of associations. Regional associations, however, were more likely to include round tables and special interest groups, a finding similar to that of the 1978 survey.

Future Concerns

The major items of change mentioned by associations were to increase their member participation and to increase the number or type of publications.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATIONS RESPONDING TO 1981 SURVEY

State/Provincial Associations

California
Florida
Hawaii
Illinois (Northern)
*Indiana
Michigan
New Jersey
Pennsylvania
Washington
Wisconsin
Ontario (Canada)

Regional

Eastern
Mid-Atlantic
Mid-South
Mid-West
New England
Northeastern
Southwest

*Inactive

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Suarez, Tanya M. State and Regional Educational Research Associations: Results of a Survey of Organization, Characteristics and Issues. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Toronto, Canada, 1978.